

Marine Safety Information Bulletin 01-04
February 25, 2004
Confined Space Entry Awareness

The following excerpt is taken from a safety bulletin sent by the Commandant of the Coast Guard on 23 February 2004 on confined space entry casualty.

Last Fall a foreign flagged containership during a coastwise voyage reported upon leaving port that the vessel's second engineer was missing. Despite an extensive search by the vessel's crew and officers, the individual was presumed to have gone ashore and missed the sailing. Upon arrival at the following port the individual was found deceased behind an access door to the main propulsion engine's scavenging air receiver.

Coast Guard investigators determined that the engineer entered the scavenging air receiver alone. Although his reason for entering the receiver is not known, engine maintenance was performed in that space while at the first port and he may have returned to inspect the area for left behind tools and materials or to retrieve something. **It appears that after his entry, the easily moved hinged / inward-opening door accidentally closed. Investigators believe that at that time, the upper left dog due to its weight and perhaps the vibration of the door as it closed, caused the dog to move allowing its edge to catch the circumferential lip at the opening. Once caught, even with the loosened fastener the door could no longer be opened from the inside of the receiver.** Unfortunately, on this occasion he entered without informing anyone or having an assistant stationed outside.

Mariners may on occasion not associate certain work areas as confined spaces and therefore not take the precautionary steps needed. Main engine crankcases, scavenging air spaces, exhaust ducting, boiler drums, furnaces, stack casings, condensers, sewage plant tanks and other systems, equipment, and components may present potential "confined space" type hazards.

One of the most important precautions of confined space entry is the notification process. It is **imperative** that the individual entering the confined space make proper notifications to someone who knows their location. It is also **strongly encouraged** that the individual entering the confined space have a person outside of the space standing by in case of an emergency.

Please refer to a following website for additional information on confined space entry safety guidelines: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/moa/docs/confined.htm> or you may contact MSO Houston-Galveston Merchant Vessel Safety Department at 713-671-5184/5100 or MSU Galveston Merchant Vessel Safety Department at 409-766-5421/5400.



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